

## AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

OF

## AMERICAN SLAVERY.

*Domestic ties torn asunder by Slavery.*

THE following account was written by a Philadelphia lady, originally from the South, whose family name is well known to the friends of literature and philanthropy.

“ Having understood that thou art collecting anecdotes of slavery, for the purpose of illustrating its practical results, I feel willing to add my mite to thy collection. Although I have for some years been removed from the heart-sickening scenes of slavery, yet I feel a deep and increasing interest in this oppressed class of my fellow countrymen; and I trust that the time is not far distant, when every bond will be broken. May those who undertake to plead the cause of the helpless and persecuted, be preserved in the meekness of wisdom !

“ I spent the winter of 1831 and '32 in Charleston, South Carolina. While I was there, my mother's waiting maid was married, by a Methodist clergyman, to a respectable colored man, whose owner gave a written testimonial of his honesty, sobriety, and industry. A short time before the wedding, his master went to New Orleans; but it was expressly understood that Harry was not expected to leave Charleston. His mistress knew of his marriage, and fully sanctioned it. The poor slaves had been united only a few weeks, and seemed comfortable, and happy in each other, when one evening, as Harry was sitting in the kitchen, he was told that some one at

the gate wished to speak with him. It was past ten o'clock, and the gate was locked ; but the white man said he must go with him, to show where one of his fellow servants lived, whom he must see that night ; and, after a little hesitation, Harry leaped the fence, and accompanied him to the dwelling where his fellow slave resided. As soon as they were both secure, a guardman took them into custody, and they were informed that they were to be conveyed to the workhouse, until a vessel sailed for New Orleans. Poor Harry's wife spent the night in utter ignorance of his fate. The next morning, as soon as she learned that her husband was in the house of correction, she hastened to see him. No opportunity for a private interview was allowed. He informed her that he was to be put on board a vessel bound to New Orleans, the following morning at sunrise. It was the Sabbath—that day which Jehovah has commanded us to keep holy. The afflicted woman went to the wharf, to take leave of her husband. He tried to comfort her with the hope that they should meet again ; but their separation was final as to this world. The succeeding summer, I heard that Harry had fallen a victim to the cholera.

“I send thee this statement, having no doubt of its entire correctness ; but if any little error has crept in, through defect of my memory, I will, if it be thy wish, send a copy of it to Charleston, and have it read to my mother's waiting maid, that it may be rectified.”

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—— Woodbury, Esq., brother of Hon. Levi Woodbury, when delivering lectures on the subject of slavery, not unfrequently adverts to the circumstances which first drew his attention to the subject. During his stay in the capital of the United States, he had a wish to visit the tomb of Washington. He was attended by an aged negro, whose business it has been for many years, to guide travellers to that consecrated spot. This old man was formerly the slave of General Washington. Mr. Woodbury asked him if he had any children. “I have had a large family,” he replied. “And are they living ?” inquired the gentleman. The voice of the aged father trembled

with emotion, and the tears started to his eyes, as he answered: "I don't know whether they are alive or dead. They were all sold away from me; and I don't know what became of them. I am alone in the world—without a child to bring me a cup of water in my old age."

Mr. Woodbury looked on the infirm and solitary being with feelings of deep compassion. "And this," thought he, "is the fate of slaves, even when owned by so good a man as General Washington! Who *would* not be an abolitionist!"

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The following case occurred towards the close of the last year, [1834,] near Palmyra, Marion County, Missouri.

A slave-trader, who was making up a *drove* for the Red River Country, bought three little boys of a planter. They were to be taken away the next day. The mother of the children was, in the mean time, chained in an outhouse, to prevent any troublesome interference on her part. During the night, she contrived to break her fetters and escape. She went directly to the place where her boys were sleeping—took an axe—chopped off the heads of all three—and then ended her own life by the same instrument.

The planter and the slave-trader, whose unrighteous bargain drove the wretched mother to this act of desperation, disputed, and went to law about the *price* of the poor slaves!

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Doctor Jesse Torrey, of Philadelphia, during a visit to the city of Washington in 1815, heard that a black woman had jumped out of the garret window of a three story brick tavern in F street, about daybreak in the morning, and that her back and arms were both dislocated by the fall. She belonged to a coffe of slaves on their way to Georgia; and the slave-trader had purchased her at Bladensburgh. Doctor Torrey immediately visited the poor creature, whom he found in the garret of the tavern from which she had endeavored to escape. She was

lying upon a bed on the floor, covered with a blanket, on which were several spots of blood from her wounds. She was very pale and dejected, but seemed quiet and uncomplaining. Both her arms had been broken between the elbows and wrist; the bones had been well set, but her restless motions had displaced them, so that they were perceptibly crooked. The mayor of the city, who was a physician, and resided near the tavern, was called to visit her immediately after she fell. He told doctor Torrey that besides her arms being broken, the lower part of the spine was so badly shattered, that it was doubtful whether she could ever walk again, if she survived. The mayor's wife said she was awakened by the fall of the woman, and heard her groans.

When doctor Torrey asked the poor slave what had induced her to take such a desperate step, she replied: "They brought me away with two of my children, and wouldn't let me see my husband—and I didn't want to go. I was so distracted that I didn't hardly know what I was about. But I didn't want to go; and I jumped out of the window. I am sorry now that I did it. They've carried my children off with them to Carolina."

Doctor Torrey was informed that the slave-trader gave the poor creature to the landlord of the tavern, as a compensation for the trouble she occasioned him. Thus was the wife torn from her husband, and the children separated from their mother, without a hope of ever seeing each other in this world!

And did not the heart of that poor slave suffer acutely, when the dearest ties of nature were thus rudely rent asunder? Slave-owners would fain convince us that the colored wife and mother has no feeling;—but the shattered limbs and bleeding wounds of this poor woman, tell too plain a story of her frantic agony!

N. B. The Rev. Amos A. Phelps saw the female slave above alluded to, in 1834. Her arm was quite crooked, but in other respects she had recovered from the effects of her fall; and was then the mother of three young children. The slave-trader who had given her to the landlord of the tavern, re-claimed her when he found her health was so completely restored, and it was supposed that a lawsuit would ensue in consequence.

